

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

of

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for a

HAND PUPPET FOR FIRST AID TREATMENT OF A CHILD'S INJURIES

HAND PUPPET FOR FIRST AID TREATMENT OF A CHILD'S INJURIES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to the application of heat or cold treatments, suitable for use with children.

Background Information and Description of Prior Art

 Various types of ice packs, thermal-cold compresses or pads of cloth containing ice packs or heating elements have been known. These devices can range in size and
10 shape and can include cloths for wrapping around body parts, and which are held in place by adhesive tape, tying or other fasteners. Alternatively, an injured person can simply hold the ice pack or heating pad on the affected area. Such devices are disclosed in United States Patent Numbers 6,320,095 and 6,582,383.

 However, a different challenge is faced when dealing with children. Children
15 may not be able to maintain an ice pack or heating element in the proper location and may also be reluctant to allow a caregiver to hold the ice pack or heating element in place. More importantly, an injured child who may be experiencing pain and general upset about the injury, can be fearful of the extent of the injury and possible pain-inducing treatments, and thus can be difficult to settle down or to convince that he or she should
20 use the device.

 Children often become attached to a favorite toy or object and are likely to feel comfortable if a familiar toy or object is nearby in the case of an injury or other stressful occurrence.

United States Patent Number 5,584,086 describes a therapeutic pillow and method, which has a bag-like cover filled with natural, granular material. The filler material has a water content in the range of 5-25% by weight. The therapeutic pillow can be constructed of different shapes, such as the shape of a toy or used by children. The filling
5 comprises naturally occurring grains or granular material, however, it is fixedly placed within the inner bag-like cover, and cannot be removed and is more similar to a beanbag type of a toy.

There remains a need, therefore, for a device for implementing heating or cooling treatment for bodily pain or injury that is amenable to use by a child, but which otherwise
10 is available for the child to play with under normal circumstances.

It is an object of the invention therefore to provide a toy-like device that can be used for either hot or cold treatment of a child's injury, but from which the hot or cold treatment device can be removed. Thereafter the child can play with the toy and familiarize themselves with the toy under less stressful, normal circumstances when pain or
15 injury is not an issue.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The disadvantages of the prior art are overcome by the device of the present invention which is a first aid hand puppet to be used to soothe a child's bumps and bruises. The hand puppet can be in different animal or character shapes such as a bunny, dog or
20 cat, or in the shape of a popular, recognizable "character" or configured as a doll. In the stomach area of the puppet, a pouch or pocket, is provided (the "belly pouch") that is sealed by an appropriate fastener such as VELCRO®. A cold pack or a heating element can be inserted into the belly pouch of the puppet. The puppet can then be worn on the hand of an adult with the heat or cold pack sitting in the palm of the hand of the adult for
25 better control and ease of use. The puppet then, on the hand of the adult, can be placed snugly over the injured area of the child, or on the forehead of a feverish child, by the adult gently grasping or cuddling the child's injured skin area. When the injury has been treated, the cold pack or heating pack can be removed from the puppet and the puppet can be once again used as a toy for the child. In this manner, the child becomes familiar with

the toy and may be less fearful of using the heating or cold pack that is hidden within the puppet during stressful times, such as during injury or illness.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be more fully understood and further advantages will become
5 apparent when reference is made to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment of the invention and the accompanying drawings of which:

Fig. 1A is a schematic front plan view of the puppet of the present invention placed over a human hand with the heating or cooling element within the palm of the hand;

10 Fig. 1B is a side view of the device of Fig. 1A;

Fig. 2 is a cutaway illustration of the puppet of the present invention illustrating the pouch from which the heating or cooling element is removable; and

Fig. 3 is a front view of the puppet of the present invention having the pouch sealed and containing the heating or cooling element.

15 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF AN ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENT

Fig. 1A is a schematic front plan, isometric illustration of the hand puppet of the present invention. The hand puppet 10 will have an animal, doll, or character shape that is recognizable and friendly to a young child. The illustrative embodiment is of a bunny
20 shape, however, the invention is equally applicable to the other types of shapes such as animals, dolls and popular characters, as noted, without limitation to the scope of the view.

When a child is injured or ill, a parent, caregiver or other adult can insert his/her hand 12 into the puppet 10. The puppet 10, as will be described hereinafter, will contain
25 a heating element or an ice pack 14, that is located within a belly pouch 15 in a stomach area of the animal or character comprising the puppet 10 in a location that will allow it to be cradled in the palm 16, of the person's hand 12. This allows for better control and ease of use of the device for attending to an injured or sick child. For example, if the child's

arm is injured, a person using the puppet could gently wrap their fingers around the child's arm and hold the ice pack on the injured location. The hand puppet 10 is also illustrated in the side view of Fig. 1B in which like components have the same reference characters as in Fig. 1A. The hand puppet can be also placed over a child's forehead as a cold compress in periods of illness.

Referring now to Fig. 2, a portion of the puppet is illustrated as puppet portion 20. The puppet portion 20 has a belly pouch 24 into which an item 26 is received. The item 26 is preferably a cold gel pack, a block of Blue Ice®, or another previously frozen ice pack device, each of which are readily available commercially. The cold pack can be removed from the freezer and placed within the pouch 24. Alternatively, heating pads or packs, which can be microwaved, are also available commercially. In addition, the heating pad may be the type of air-activated device in which once the packaging is open, the exposure to air causes the device to begin heating. A heating device 26 can be placed within the pouch 24 of the puppet 20 and then the puppet can be held in the adult's hand and the child's injured skin area can be hugged and warmed thereby.

In order to secure the pouch 24 in a closed position, a suitable fastener is employed to retain the item 26 within the pouch 24. In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, the fastener is comprised of VELCRO®. As illustrated in Fig. 3, the puppet 30 includes the pouch 34 that houses the heating or cooling element 36 and is fastened by a VELCRO® strip 38, which on one end will have a loop-type configuration and at the other a mesh that securely engages the loops. Other types of fasteners, such as snaps and the like may be used while remaining within the scope of the present invention. The entire assembly can then be used to provide treatment to traumatic injuries to particular body areas and to provide comfort or cooling in other non-injury situations.

In normal circumstances, when injury, pain or illness is not being treated, the pouch can be removed from the puppet 30 and the puppet 30 can then be used as a normal hand puppet or toy by the child in the ordinary course of daily activities. In this way, the puppet 30 can become a well-known toy for the child, and the familiarity of the puppet will enhance the likelihood that the child will allow an adult to treat the injury or

painful site and will feel comforted thereby when the need arises and the hot or cold pack is inserted into the belly pouch.

5 It should be understood that the hand puppet may be made of any number of appropriate materials such as that of plush toys or soft cotton or other flexible materials that allow the transfer of the hot or cold through the material. Alternatively, a portion of the material that allows the transfer of the hot or cold could be inserted within the pouch area 14 such that the temperature delivery will occur and the remainder of the puppet 30 could be comprised of a plush or other soft material.

10 The foregoing description has been directed to specific embodiments of the invention. It will be apparent, however, that other variations and modifications may be made to the described embodiments with the attainment of some or all of the advantages of such. Therefore, it is the object of the appended claims to cover all such variations and modifications as come within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

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What is claimed is: